

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF NEW JERSEY

SHAUN LAMAR JOHNSON,

Plaintiff,

v.

CAMDEN COUNTY JAIL,

Defendant.

HONORABLE JEROME B. SIMANDLE

Civil Action
No. 16-7204 (JBS-AMD)

OPINION

APPEARANCES:

Shaun Lamar Johnson, Plaintiff Pro Se
17 Ablett Village
Camden, NJ 08105

SIMANDLE, Chief District Judge:

I. INTRODUCTION

Plaintiff Shaun Lamar Johnson seeks to bring a civil rights complaint pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 1983 against the Camden County Jail ("CCJ"). Complaint, Docket Entry 1.

At this time, the Court must review the complaint, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2), to determine whether it should be dismissed as frivolous or malicious, for failure to state a claim upon which relief may be granted, or because it seeks monetary relief from a defendant who is immune from such relief. For the reasons set forth below, the Court will dismiss the complaint with prejudice for failure to state a claim. 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(b)(ii).

II. BACKGROUND

Plaintiff alleges that he was confined in the CCJ in January or February 2009. Complaint § III. He states: "I was housed as the fourth inmate in 2 man cell. I had to sleep on the floor with uncomplorable conditions for tickets[.] I was woke up from people urinating on me because the only spot was by the toilet[.]" *Id.*

III. STANDARD OF REVIEW

Section 1915(e)(2) requires a court to review complaints prior to service in cases in which a plaintiff is proceeding *in forma pauperis*. The Court must *sua sponte* dismiss any claim that is frivolous, is malicious, fails to state a claim upon which relief may be granted, or seeks monetary relief from a defendant who is immune from such relief. This action is subject to *sua sponte* screening for dismissal under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B) because Plaintiff is proceeding *in forma pauperis*.

To survive *sua sponte* screening for failure to state a claim, the complaint must allege "sufficient factual matter" to show that the claim is facially plausible. *Fowler v. UPMS Shadyside*, 578 F.3d 203, 210 (3d Cir. 2009) (citation omitted). "A claim has facial plausibility when the plaintiff pleads factual content that allows the court to draw the reasonable inference that the defendant is liable for the misconduct alleged." *Fair Wind Sailing, Inc. v. Dempster*, 764 F.3d 303, 308

n.3 (3d Cir. 2014). "[A] pleading that offers 'labels or conclusions' or 'a formulaic recitation of the elements of a cause of action will not do.'" *Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 556 U.S. 662, 678 (2009) (quoting *Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly*, 550 U.S. 544, 555 (2007)).

IV. DISCUSSION

Plaintiff presumably seeks monetary damages¹ from CCJ for allegedly unconstitutional conditions of confinement. Primarily, the complaint must be dismissed as the CCJ is not a "state actor" within the meaning of § 1983. See *Crawford v. McMillian*, 660 F. App'x 113, 116 (3d Cir. 2016) ("[T]he prison is not an entity subject to suit under 42 U.S.C. § 1983.") (citing *Fischer v. Cahill*, 474 F.2d 991, 992 (3d Cir. 1973)). Accordingly, the claims against CCJ must be dismissed with prejudice.

Generally, "plaintiffs who file complaints subject to dismissal under [§ 1915] should receive leave to amend unless amendment would be inequitable or futile." *Grayson v. Mayview State Hosp.*, 293 F.3d 103, 114 (3d Cir. 2002). This Court denies leave to amend at this time as Plaintiff's complaint is barred by the statute of limitations, which is governed by New Jersey's two-year limitations period for personal injury.² See *Wilson v.*

¹ Plaintiff has not stated any requested relief in the complaint.

² "Although the running of the statute of limitations is ordinarily an affirmative defense, where that defense is obvious from the face of the complaint and no development of the record

Garcia, 471 U.S. 261, 276 (1985); *Dique v. N.J. State Police*, 603 F.3d 181, 185 (3d Cir. 2010). The accrual date of a § 1983 action is determined by federal law, however. *Wallace v. Kato*, 549 U.S. 384, 388 (2007); *Montanez v. Sec'y Pa. Dep't of Corr.*, 773 F.3d 472, 480 (3d Cir. 2014).

"Under federal law, a cause of action accrues when the plaintiff knew or should have known of the injury upon which the action is based." *Montanez*, 773 F.3d at 480 (internal quotation marks omitted). Plaintiff states the events giving rise to his claims occurred in January or February 2009. The allegedly unconstitutional conditions of confinement at CCJ would have been immediately apparent to Plaintiff at the time of his detention; therefore, the statute of limitations for Plaintiff's claims expired in 2011. As there are no grounds for equitable tolling of the statute of limitations,³ the complaint will be dismissed with prejudice. *Ostuni v. Wa Wa's Mart*, 532 F. App'x

is necessary, a court may dismiss a time-barred complaint *sua sponte* under § 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B)(ii) for failure to state a claim." *Ostuni v. Wa Wa's Mart*, 532 F. App'x 110, 111-12 (3d Cir. 2013) (*per curiam*).

³ Equitable tolling "is only appropriate '(1) where the defendant has actively misled the plaintiff respecting the plaintiff's cause of action; (2) where the plaintiff in some extraordinary way has been prevented from asserting his or her rights; or (3) where the plaintiff has timely asserted his or her rights mistakenly in the wrong forum.'" *Omar v. Blackman*, 590 F. App'x 162, 166 (3d Cir. 2014) (quoting *Santos ex rel. Beato v. United States*, 559 F.3d 189, 197 (3d Cir. 2009)).

110, 112 (3d Cir. 2013) (*per curiam*) (affirming dismissal with prejudice due to expiration of statute of limitations).

V. CONCLUSION

For the reasons stated above, the complaint is dismissed with prejudice for failure to state a claim. An appropriate order follows.

February 28, 2017

Date

s/ Jerome B. Simandle

JEROME B. SIMANDLE

Chief U.S. District Judge